

5.6 SAS ASSIST

Introduction

The SAS ASSIST option in StEPS provides access to a SAS product called “SAS/ASSIST”. SAS/ASSIST is a software product developed and maintained by the SAS Institute. It is a menu-driven system that provides a point-and-click approach to using SAS software, without having to know SAS code. SAS/ASSIST allows you to:

- Perform queries
- Perform various types of data analysis
- Create reports and listings
- Perform graphical data analysis
- Create your own data sets

Accessing the Screen

- Click on the TOOLS button from the StEPS Main Menu.
- Select the SAS ASSIST button from the TOOLS Menu to display the following:

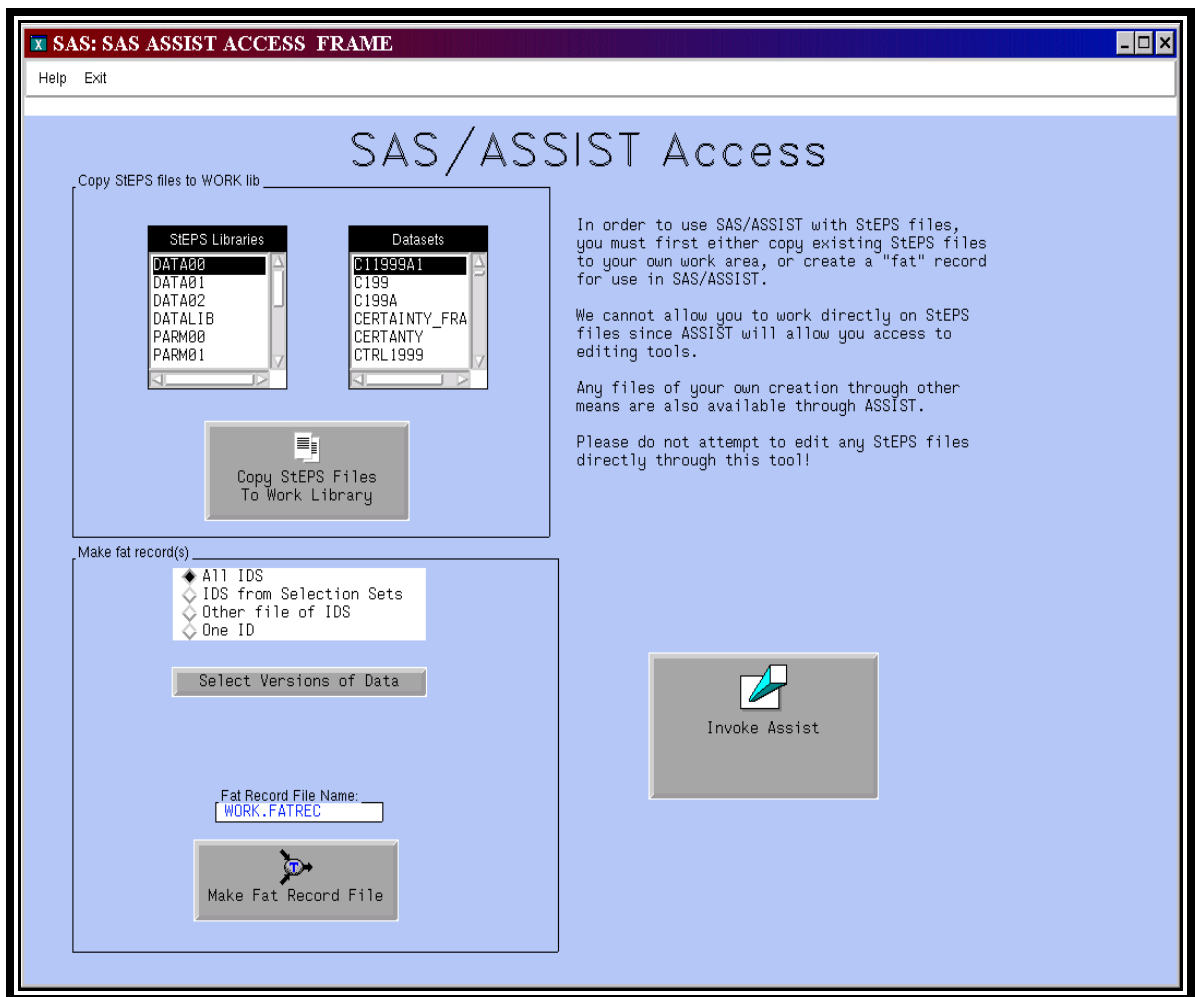


Figure 5.6 SAS/ASSIST Transition Screen

Screen Features

When accessing SAS/ASSIST, StEPS provides a transition screen which prompts you to copy StEPS data sets to a work area. When using SAS/ASSIST, you will perform your data analysis and queries using the data sets stored in this work area. The reason for working with a “copy” of a data set, instead of the “actual” StEPS data set, is to prevent you from accidentally overwriting or damaging StEPS files.

The transition screen also allows you to create a “fat record” for a single ID or multiple IDs. Remember that there are 2 different control files in StEPS, as well as a separate item file. Creating a fat record means combining data from both control files and the item file (for a specific ID) into ONE data set. You can then use this single data set for analysis when in SAS/ASSIST.

COPYING STEPS FILES TO THE WORK LIBRARY

To copy an existing StEPS data set to the WORK library for use in SAS/ASSIST:

1. Select a library from the “StEPS Library” box, using the mouse. A list of all data sets contained in that library will display in the box to the right called “Data sets”.
2. Click on the data set you wish to copy.
3. Click on the “Copy StEPS Files to Work Library” button. This will copy the data set selected to the WORK library. Although the library will change, the filename will remain the same. A message will display in the upper left corner of the screen indicating the location of the data set you have just copied.
4. Click on the “Invoke ASSIST” button to access SAS/ASSIST. Once in SAS/ASSIST, you must select the appropriate data set from this work library before you begin your analysis.

MAKING A FAT RECORD

You can make a fat record for an ID (or multiple IDs) to combine information from the Master Control file, Stat Period Control file and Item file into ONE data set. You can make a fat record for:

1. All IDs in the survey
 2. Only those IDs contained in a particular selection set (See Chapter 4.1 for more information on creating selection sets.)
 3. IDs contained in some other file that you have created
 4. One ID
- To create a fat record, click on one of the four options listed above.
 - Avoid creating a fat record for “ALL” IDs in the survey if possible. Creating a fat record using all IDs will take longer to create, which could be significant for very large surveys. It may also take longer to run queries and perform data analysis on the data set if it contains a large number of records.
 - If you choose to create a fat record using IDs from a selection set, you will be prompted to specify the selection set you want to use. If you choose to use some “other” file for creating your fat record, you will be prompted to enter its filename. So, if you choose to create a fat record for only “1” ID, you will be prompted to enter the ID.
 - You may select one data version or a combination of data versions to view in the fat record. Click on the radio button next to the data version(s) you wish to include. You can click on a data version a second time to deselect it.

- Once the fat record has been created, regardless of which option is chosen, it will be stored in a library called “WORK” and assigned a data set name of “FATREC”. This data set name will display in the box “Fat record file name” located at the bottom of the screen.
- After creating the fat record, click on the “Invoke ASSIST” button to access SAS/ASSIST. Be sure to select the correct data set (WORK.FATREC) before beginning your analysis.

INVOKING SAS ASSIST

Once you have copied a data set to a work area OR created a fat record, click on the “Invoke Assist” button to access SAS/ASSIST.

How to use SAS/ASSIST will not be discussed in the StEPS User Manual. The Bureau offers a class on using SAS/ASSIST and we encourage you to take it. Contact your supervisor for more information on SAS classes offered at the Census Bureau.

SAS/ASSIST does contain a tutorial which may prove helpful in learning more about the functionality and capabilities of SAS/ASSIST. Click on the “Tutorial” button from the SAS/ASSIST Main Menu for more information. In addition, HELP screens are available throughout the system.

P-MENU

P-Menu	Options	Function
HELP	WhoamI (F7)	Display user default and system information
EXIT	StEPS Main Menu (Home) Exit (F3)	Return to StEPS Main Menu Exit to previous screen